

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-15 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 8 are amended. Claims 2 and 9 remain canceled, and Claims 16-26 remain withdrawn.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by the Examiner during the interview conducted on May 4, 2006. During the interview, claim amendments corresponding to those presented herewith were discussed. The Examiner gave favorable indication to the proposed claim amendments, but requested that Applicants submit amendments in an RCE.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, and 10-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Terasaki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,432,516, herein "Terasaki"). Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Graff et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,492,026, herein "Graff"). Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, and 10-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by Silvernail (U.S. Patent No. 6,576,351). Claims 1, 3-4, 6-8, 10-11, 13, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Chung et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,836,070, herein "Chung"). For at least the reasons discussed below, Applicants respectfully request these art rejections be withdrawn.

In particular, not one of Terasaki, Graff, Silvernail, or Chung teaches or suggests at least a barrier comprising a material, the composition of which varies substantially

continuously across a thickness thereof. Accordingly, withdrawal of the art rejections of Claims 1 and 8, and claims dependent therefrom, is respectfully requested.

In view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable consideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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